



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Guilty Plea

DEFENDANT: Mahmoud Youssef Kourani, 34

Dearborn Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Support to Hizballah

Mahmoud Youssef Kourani formerly of Dearborn, Michigan and Yater, Lebanon pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to the Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, Hizballah, Tuesday, March 1 in federal court in Detroit. The guilty plea was entered before United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The information presented to the court at the time of the guilty plea showed that Mahmoud Kourani organized and hosted meetings at his Dearborn residence during Ramadan of 2002. During the meetings, a guest speaker from Lebanon solicited the participants to make donations to Hizballah. Pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, effective October 8, 1997, the Secretary of State designated Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization by finding that the organization is a foreign organization that engages in terrorist activity threatening the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States. Hizballah, also known as "Party of God," also known as "Islamic Jihad," among other

names, is a worldwide terrorist network which has conducted numerous high profile terrorist attacks in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. The money solicited by Kourani's conspiracy was intended to support Hizballah's "orphans of martyrs" program to benefit the families of those killed in Hizballah terrorist operations or by Hizballah's enemies.

In announcing the guilty plea, United States Attorney Craig S. Morford commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, and Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell who handled the prosecution.

"Combating terrorism is the number one priority of the Department of Justice, and this prosecution underscores our commitment to disrupt the funding of terrorist organizations," said United States Attorney Craig S. Morford. "Raising money for designated terrorist organizations, like Hizballah, is a serious crime which will be vigorously pursued in the Eastern District of Michigan."

Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, said "The FBI views counter-terrorism as its highest priority. We thank all the members of Detroit's Joint Terrorism Task Force for their assistance in the successful outcome of this investigation. This investigation is further evidence of the FBI's commitment to combat terrorism nationwide, including the Detroit area."

A copy of the superseding information is attached. Sentencing is scheduled for June 14, 2005. Kourani faces a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine, to be followed by deportation to Lebanon.